

A close-up portrait of KRS-One, a Black man with a serious expression, wearing a black beanie and a black t-shirt. He has short dreadlocks visible at the sides. The background is a bright, clear blue sky with some faint city buildings visible on the left side. The text 'KRS-ONE' is in the top left, and 'I M A M C R U 1 2' is at the bottom.

KRS-ONE

I M A M C R U 1 2

KRS-One Lyrics

"The Beginning"

Yo check your mic, let's check these levels
Check check check check
Ok word we got the sound, let me know when the break is coming in
Nah, there's no break I am just going straight through
Aight kick that shit

Heaven-sent I can prove this
Any crowd turn me up loud
KR will move this
Long before Easy- E is MC he was ruthless
Kickin rhyme, spittin 'rhyme, freestyle, I does this who's this
You don't know me homie I am the one and only
I turn you two into a toll and tell you, you owe me
You ain't gotta go to the past to know me homie
I'm KRS-One, my power is now add control
These rappers are phony and lonely
I catch 'em coming out of show me's
I don't Oscar or admire they baloney
No phony, I spit for the time from the mind
So when I spit on the head of course I am ahead of my time
Yes I am better with rhyme and it's evident I'm
The lyrically benevolent kind, this shit you never gonna find
I am spitting plenty medleys, this is work not a job
Rappers are crying like a boss or a verse they soft
That is when they get robbed and disappointment
They not anointed, I get em set up like an appointment
I spit the same heat you light the joint with, fire
Spit the truth no liar, heaven-sent this is higher
The might cooks, I write books, the heavyweight champion
This song becomes a knockout with the right hook
I am raw, meaning not cooked
These fake rappers heads are down
Because into the face of KRS they do not look
40 cal. style, rampampam like big drums
When I heat up the cup of the 420 it's done
Light up the Cheech with the Chong
I teach when I come
Knowledge reign is supreme
What these rappers is speaking is dumb
It's a treat when I come
I'm not what you used to
I'm the return of Khufu all over these tracks like Choo-Choo
I am the Guru, so when my teaching premiers it's Gang Starr
Hitting you and your man in the same car
These wack rappers, fuck who they are
KRS is like a hooligan, hittin' em all with the same bars
Hooligans, hittin em with the same bars
Yo' wack style just ain't ours, Venus to Mars

I'm teaching with bars, spitting these bars
But young'ns under 21 can't even get into these bars
So I don't blame 'em if they not seeing these bars
'Cause when I hit 'em with my universe all they seeing is stars
Speaking of bars when I spit one
You can see it's all about impact over and income
The big one, multi-directional and exceptionable
10 of my first 20 albums are all collect-able
You feel the heat when I am next to you
Truly legendary, underground undetectable and revolutionary
Most of what is going on today, you know we knew already
I try to teach our people of poverty
And took to many and shook to many
We can see what a curse is so I reemerge
So these young'ns who the first is
The minister, frying rap chickens like churches
And the worst is seeing your temperature taken by nurses
IV-bags, your family picking out hearses
It's like you at the ball-place center and you won't survive these verses
Sprite means spirit so I obey what my thirst is
The whole planet of this so called Earth is what my turf is
KRS-One...

Ok ok, hold on hold on, I got this
This shit is gon' be fire
Levels is on point
You sound good out here
Let's get this project started

KRS-One Lyrics

"Raw Hip Hop"

Let's go back (Let's go back, let's go back)
Back into time (Back into time, back into time)

Back in seventy-three in the borough of Bronx
Man, you couldn't be weak, man, you had to be smart
See, we talkin' 'bout streets, now we talkin' 'bout art
When we talkin' 'bout beats, man, we talkin' 'bout heart
We was rockin' a hard beat live in the park
Guns spark in the dark, it was all just a part
Of the eighties Bronx scene that created all
"How you know, KRS?" 'Cause I was there from the start
Sixteen-hundred Centric Avenue, that was the spot
Fifteen-twenty, hip-hop started right on my block
This original hip-hop whether you like it or not
I'm remindin' through this rhymin' 'cause you might have forgot

Drop on the spot, b-boys start pop
Live on the block, this is raw hip-hop
Drop on the spot, graf writers don't stop
Bottom to the top, this is raw hip-hop
Drop on the spot, MCs make it hot
Microphone pop, this is raw hip-hop
Drop on the spot, DJs on the chop
Cut, mix, scratch, this is raw—

See, when we would begin, think where the heroin in
They was really determined that we was never gon' win
But by lookin' within, we began to believe
That we was breakers and writers, DJs and MCs
We was so damn poor, we was eatin' free cheese
But that made us raw, we started eatin' MCs
This before the fees and the MTVs
When you walked in New York and your ears would freeze
Wildin' beats and [?], my necks and Ts
Night-long BVDs, we was fuckin' with these
We was fuckin' with this, we was fuckin' with that
But when the eighties came in, we started fuckin' with crack
And along with the crack came a big ol' gat
And along with the gat came a big ol' stack
'Cause if you ain't had that, you was the next to get jacked
This the way that it was, I'm just takin' it back

Drop on the spot, b-boys start pop
Live on the block, this is raw hip-hop
Drop on the spot, graf writers don't stop
Bottom to the top, this is raw hip-hop
Drop on the spot, MCs make it hot
Microphone pop, this is raw hip-hop

Drop on the spot, DJs on the chop
Cut, mix, scratch, this is raw—

This the way that it was, this the way that it went
Man, you had to survive, caught up with the rent
When the nineties arrived, eighties' money was spent
All them dudes that was live? To the prison they went
And the dudes that survived? They began to repent
Then they realized in rap, there was money to get
So gangstas became rappers, rappers became gangstas
Fake became the real for the payment

KRS-One Lyrics

"Krazy"

Yeah

My lyrics is crazy
They must be crazy
My lyrics is crazy

Kris is the Pharaoh, with bow and a arrow
We double the barrel gorilla apparel
The mightiest pharaoh don't think of a battle
My lyrics is comin' so crazy
Spittin' immaculate the actual factual front to the back of you
Clappin' and crackin' you hackin' the mac for you
Look at them laugh at you
Lyrics is coming so crazy
Spittin' with me now you see what I am teaching
Your mind I am reaching with all that I'm teaching
That love and that peace and it never will weaken the truth I am speaking is crazy
Truth I am speaking get used to repeating
The youth I am reaching
With proof of this teachin' I speak for a reason
So they can believe in the truth of MCin' it's crazy
Crackin' the back of these rappers
I'm passin' these actors, I'm faster
Spittin' metal natural rippin' clubs forever
We be coming better, spreading love forever, crazy
You hearing a pro, I'm spittin' the flow that you know
Higher level thinking I come to show
Knowledge of self is a thing you must know
You see what they playing, they steady betraying
The culture we making, exploiting and taking
Look at them faking what we are creating
Now you mistakin' what's real and what's fakin'
This thing they do for the money they making
They sell out their people, their culture, their nation
Sell out their soul for a radio station
So they could be playing in heavy rotation
You see what I'm saying, our culture they taking
But that's not enough, it's our spirit they breaking
And only the culture can see what I'm saying
'Cause only the culture will see them betraying
You see what they playing, you see what they saying
And you can not see us, our people they slaying
Well, maybe you do, and then maybe you don't
And then maybe you will and then maybe you won't
But it's our community, that's who's at hope of
The greed and the crime and the police are chokin'
The TV is playin' that okely-doke while our people are dyin'
You seein' them choke with that cheatin' and lyin'

They tellin' our people, now this is they hope
But did anything change with the last vote?
The time before that did we pass something?
All we've been getting is Chapter 11
While racists with weapons are shooting our reverends
A message from Heaven with all that you getting
Get understanding, overstanding this lesson
With all of the blingin' and cash that you getting
You stumble for sure it's the poor you neglecting
The thieves and the liars they all in your section
I'm bringing my people in different directions

Crazy
My lyrics is crazy
I'm coming so crazy
Ha, they must be crazy

Yo
So here goes another my sisters and brothers
It's obvious KRS ain't like these others
I've been out the bed while they under the covers
I spit off the head while they babble and stutter
Not three and not two but the one is my number
I'm spitting my written I tour every summer
With every year I get younger and younger
But some want to doubt and continue to wonder, is crazy
They continue to blunder, is crazy
They continue to slumber
What I'm teaching is what I'm expressing
I'm teaching the streets that the mind is a weapon
Like anything you can perceive in perception
It's what you will manifest all in your section, it's crazy
Set up your own direction, crazy
Don't get caught up on complexion, crazy
This is that reason I'm spitting and books getting written
'Cause you be forgetting, it's crazy

Crazy
My lyrics is crazy
I'm coming so crazy

KRS-One Lyrics

"Can You Dance"

Can you dance?
I wanna see everybody on the dance floor right now
I'm 'bout to put you all on the test
Let's go!
Do you know the dances?
Do you know the hip-hop dances?
Let's see

This one is the raw for sure, takin' no chances
Bringin' back them old-school dancers, here's the answers
Whether you remember or you're new to this endeavor
Dance is a major part of this culture forever
What are we preservin' if the children ain't learnin'?
Culture ain't about just numberin' and just wordin'
Sometime you gotta show the culture and the art
Let's start with the Biz Mark dance—come on, everybody

After the Biz Mark, the party 'bout to get sparked
This is that moment you get live, get courage, get hard
I spit art, I'm one of a kind, they not me
I'm digitally underground like Shock-G
Speakin' of Shock-G, when I jump, we jump
That's Kris Kross but I'm talkin' 'bout Humpty Dump
When you up, you up, what? This is your chance
Come on, everybody, let's do the Humpty Dance, let's go!

Whoo

Now that was the Humpty, now let's get it chunky
Like Biz used to say, "Yo, let's get funky"
Funky with the funk flow, we don't stop
Right about now, we gonna take it to the wop
Remember the wop? Feet slide, shoulder drop?
We did it in the clubs, we even did it on the block
Ready, set, go—stand on your spot
Take it to the top, come on, y'all—let's do the wop

Watch this

Woppin' non-stop in hip-hop and we drop it
We ain't even get yet to poppin' or lockin'
It's shockin' how many dance moves we came in
Obviously me and the ancestors got the same gift
The same lift, the same rift and the same spliff
Like Bob Marley said, "When the music hits, it's painless"
You can't tame this or hate this, you gotta love me
Come on, y'all, let me see you do the dougie

Whoo
That's right
That's right
This that part where we go freestyle
Some of y'all doin' the Cabbage Patch
Some of y'all doin' the Running Man
Let me see what you got, come on
Freestyle!
Free, free, freestyle, come on, y'all
Yeah, where all my b-boys at?
Where all my b-girls at?
Okay, we out

KRS-One Lyrics

"Achieving The Levels"

(Ok I see how you doin' it, that was dope
I got this gutter shit lined up, I know you ain't tired)

(What? Ha ha ha. Really?)

I ain't even tryin' or peekin'
I just ripped a club down last weekend
I'm no trick but I'm treating rappers like Halloween
They all costume no substance and that's what hollow means
They really empty like a lot of fiends
They holding a hundred but they don't really know what a one dollar means
They slaves to slave economies
Sellouts and traitors posing as hip-hop, we got a lot of these
So I be spittin' my philosophies with evidence
No doubt this is the route so why the hesitance?
Is it because I'm spittin' with divine intelligence and excellence and you hearing rhymes that are irrelevant?
Knowledge Reigns Supreme, KRS is how I'm spellin' it
The top one of the top five and that's the end of it
I judge my pen when I sentence it
Then imprison your mind with my penmanship, but here's some better shit
Get with me, you forgot? Let me jog your memory
I'm a poor righteous teacher and a public enemy
Fake ass DJs, they do not play or even mention me
I'm scary, revolutionary. Fake? I will never be
Real I'll forever be
I'm a whole different entity
I spit rhymes by the mouth and by telepathy
Health love awareness and wealth, that's the recipe
I'm 50 and 20 year olds can't match the energy
On stage I'm in a rage, yeah it's like 10 of me
Disrespect the teacher, you know the penalty
KRS-One, I'm from a whole different century
I'm paid in full so you can ch-ch-check out my melody
Murderin' mics, they chargin' me with a felony
But I can't be caught because the ancestors dwell in me
Movin' with hesitancy when you mentionin' me
I'm an original MC, get your T-I-C-K-E-T
The mic grabber, beat stabber, street grammar, heat blaster
I stay chunky and hungry so I eat faster
Gobble gobble gobble most rappers are hollow
So KRS-One becomes that hard act to follow
Hard beats, hard rhymes, hard cuttin'
"Wha-dot-dot-dot-dang!" gets the whole place jumpin'
This is that original Boogie Down Productions
Last of them true MCs that still function
Boom bap, boom bap
When the mic turns on, dudes be like, "Who's that?"
Crowd rushin' in, security's like, "Move back!"

Real skill, that's what a lot of you lack
I'm turnin' on my mic to reveal a new batch
Rappers say they great, but compared to Kris, who match?
Amber alert on the phone when you snatched
How you a DJ? You ain't even start from scratch

(Yeah I know you waitin', I'm just messin' with the reverb a little bit, just keep goin' and I'll tell you when to stop)

You still here? It ain't over yet
Knowledge reigns, so I'ma leave 'em soaking wet
If you listenin' to a legend, this is what you supposed to get
Real skill, my utmost respect, or a broken neck
Flawless rawness I pour this through the cordless, all this is lawless
I'm the tallest, people say, "Give me more Kris!"
You can't ignore this you know you saw this, the extensive tallest is flawless
We on this because dope is what they call this
So from the gutter the number one, he comes from under from the hood when the hood was a hood and it
peaked in summer
We used to speak our rhymes to Funky Drummer
We called it The Dozens, a competition of words, jokes about your mother
Now knowledge reigning supreme like no other
The soul brother whose beats and words so gutter
No wonder this brother when he utters you don't blow
Not with the gun though, with the one flow, you like, "Fuck no!"
This no luck though, I'm one bro
You can now catch me teaching in Brick City at 55 Ludlow
Dudes be like, "Uh oh, we in trouble"
King of the jungle, no time to mumble, kingdom's gonna crumble
I step they stumble I be like bumble a one-two to run to a traitor like fuck you and bring the truck through
I gets down but you can't see what I'm up to
I'm tacklin' rappers like, "Hut one! Hut two!"
When I come through

(Ok ok we good, let's change up the flow)

KRS-One Lyrics

"Knock Em Out"

Wooh, oh
Joe Riggs, what you saying

Knock Em Out the box Kris, out the box Kris
Knock Em Out the box Kris, out the box Kris
Knock Em Out the box Kris, out the box Kris
Knock Em Out the box Kris, out the box Kris

Yeah, I'm spitting truth, ain't nothing fancy
Fake — I can't be, with this microphone I'm handy
Radio and video bans me, they can't stand me
I'm the opposite of these hoes dancing in panties
Truth seeker, I write for people, not a grammy
The true Teacha, teaching about ancestors and family
The proof seeker, bringing evidence, not the fallacy
The new leader, bringing solutions to the insanity
This strategy avoid calamity and tragedy
Do not let technology run off with your humanity
I deal with reality, not Lemon or Hannity
This is why most of these rappers is not matching me
It's a catastrophe that got you looking at a screen
And the screen is showing you scenes of what your culture means
As for society and poverty, drug dealers and fiends
These ain't the images that tell you what your culture means
Rappers like KRS-One are nowhere on the scene
They promote rappers than contradict Dr. King's Dream
These acts are deliberate, they're part of the same scheme
Cops shot the kid, I still hear him scream
This ain't funny, so don't you dare laugh
Just another case about the wrong path
Straight and narrow or you will not last
Slick Rick told y'all, goodnight

Knock Em Out the box Kris, out the box Kris
Knock Em Out the box Kris, out the box Kris
Knock Em Out the box Kris, out the box Kris
Knock Em Out the box Kris, out the box Kris

Knock Em Out the box Kris, Kris already got this
This is what Hip Hop is, spitting my synopsis
A sellout? I am not this, pull out and cop this
Revolutionary topic right over the hot shit
Video is for your optics, that's why you watch this
But it can become hypnotic if you do not stop it
Your mind you must unlock it from their phony topics
Focus on the truth, with proof, use your logic
Words are like purpose, character, you got it?
Or got 'em, invisible forces, can you spot 'em?

The blind continues to lead the blind to the bottom
Destroying their cities like Gomorrah and Sodom
I rock 'em with truth 'cause Knowledge Reigns Supreme
Cops shot the kid, I still hear him scream
This ain't funny, so don't you dare laugh
Just another case about the wrong path
Straight and narrow or you will not last
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Knock Em Out the box Kris, out the box Kris
Knock Em Out the box Kris, out the box Kris
Knock Em Out the box Kris, out the box Kris
Knock Em Out the box Kris, out the box Kris

Out the box Kris, like a stone I rock this
The beginner just eating dinner, no I am not this
I take it back to Schoolly D and Super Lover Cee
Steady B, I'm Three Times Dope or dope times three
You know me, I ain't stutter

Why do you think they never promote the original culture they putting us under

We all know the truth about Hip Hop and what it really is
But we sit and settle for what they peddle to little kids
I'm piping like a kettle, this mental man will flip your lid
Take it back to when we used to rap and DJs zig-a-zig
When you reverse EVIL, believe me people you really LIVE
Help, love or witnessing wealth, that's what I'm here to give
No I do not think of my self, I think of these future kids
Everything we doing today will determine how they live
Many DJs cutting and mixing but they ain't playing nothing
Many rappers, ripping and rapping but they ain't saying nothing
Corporate yelling, "Black Lives Matter!" but they stay fronting
That's why this Black Lives Rapper he keeps in way bumping
It ain't nothing, no assumptions, just facts
It seems Knowledge is Reigning Supreme and that's that
Bring it back, rappers rapping like we ain't under attack
They traders and our neighbors, which makes it doubly wack
Look at that while these corny ass rappers serving their fiends
Cop shot the kid, I still hear him scream
This ain't funny, so don't you dare laugh
Just another case about the wrong path
Straight and narrow or you will not last
Slick Rick told y'all, goodnight

Knock Em Out the box Kris, out the box Kris
Knock Em Out the box Kris, out the box Kris
Knock Em Out the box Kris, out the box Kris
Knock Em Out the box Kris, out the box Kris

KRS-One Lyrics

"I M A M C R U 1 2"

I M A MC, R U 1 2?

You spell it out as each letter I said to you

I M A MC, R U 1 2?

That's the title of the project that I'm sending to you

It's a message to MCs that whatever you do

Keep your skills tight, the future is depending on you

Never spit for only money or what they're handing to you

Spit for the people, try to predict what your man going to do

Get hungry on them, look at rappers with a cannibal view

I roll with an animal crew and we battled a few

But these days I'm spiting in a party after it's through

Cypher style, keeping it in with a spectacular view

You ain't attacking a crew, in fact we're clapping at you

I wish they would, so I could snap these rappers in two

I be rapping from the sound of the Kalamazoo

Smacking rappers around like the tennis racquets they do

I be spitting what's legitimate, factual, actual and true

Put the mic down for another sound, I am not going to do

I was there in the beginning, I'll be there when it's through

I M A MC, R U 1 2?

I M A MC, R U 1 2?

If you got a chance to spit it, what you gonna do?

I'm too hot to handle, too hot for fans too

When I spit my MC light, they say "we cram to understand you"

I stay hot like the Sudan do

Open your mind, I plan to

With real knowledge, nothing you can't do

Knowledge Reigns Supreme on these fakers I trample

Show up at the spot while they mumble and ramble

Pull out the wax, burn these rappers down like a candle

Watching them scramble, this is just a little example

The street teacher type, at the peak of height, the leader type

The street preacher type, culture keeper, divine speaker type

Truth seeker type, deeper type, seeking freedom type

The eager type, KRS-One, that's what he is like

Making sure the family eating right while we're seeking light

Real skill when I squeeze the mic you're gonna see tonight

146 and Broadway, that's the throwback

Broadway RT 86, that's where the show's at

Jump on the mic with no skill? You get your nose cracked

Me? I was drilling them, killing them, man, you know that

All Across 110 Street, Bobby Womack

Youngins saying "That's the OG, that's the ol' cat"

That's the teacher speaking that new rap and old rap

I'm giving you your heritage back, youngin, hold that

Uh huh

Uh huh

I M A MC, R U 1 2?

I like the sound of it

Only a few heads ever come around and shit

No getting around this shit, I'm pounding it

When I Ad Rock, I get so Beastie Boy I start growling spit

You drowning in it, my flow is like the OG Kush

You loving every ounce that you get

I made it out of the pit, no glam and no glit

This may be Run's House, but I'm the handyman pulling hammers real quick

You can't touch this, with a hand or a grip

Rappers avoiding the smoke like a cigarette after it's lit

I spit the tactical, mathematical, actual shit

After I spit, it's a grip I'm about to go get

Got skills? You a rapper? This the question for you

I M A MC, R U 1 2?

Turn to your friends, if they spit it, ask them too

I M A MC, R U 1 2?

KRS-One Lyrics

"Think Bigger"

(feat. G. Simone)

Gather round (oh yeah)

Think bigger

Think bigger

(This is about life)

Life

(Real life)

Real life

Your life

My life

Real life

Young and strugglin' out there buggin'

Let me sing a song for you

This song ain't for everybody, this is for the chosen few

Those that's born with purpose never worthless this is all for you

You hearin' me at this moment 'cause the spirit is calling you

Somethin' pressing inside revealing it's truth is calling you

But if you don't understand the acronym Simone brought to you

The media will lead your mind to do things you don't want to do

Like dissin' your own heritage and the lineage that belongs to you

This is what a colonists about, dissin' all of you

The past, the present, the future, and what you gonna do

It's not just about now, it's about tomorrow too

You are the cultural foundation of those that will follow you

Just like you model the past, the future gonna model you

So what from this era are you tellin' the future it has to do?

When the future looks back, will they really respect or laugh at you?

These are the real questions that real life will be asking you

But if you distracted by the temptations that they flashin' you

You won't see the opportunities that steady passin' you

This is why despite despite their criticisms I bring the class to you

Because culture ain't about now, it's about who comes after you

Think bigger

Think bigger

Think love

Hear me on this second take

KRS is never fake

Go ahead get your dinner plate

But let me now get somethin' straight

Ain't nobody hatin' on you youngins how you do your do

But you too young to see how these corporations are usin' you

Culturally abusing you, pickin' and choosin' you

Programmin' your mind through the music lines you cruisin' to

Think about the future you, the higher you, the super you

Or will the future you turn out to only be the stupid you?

Knowledge reigns supreme learn this theme it never goes away
The culture keeper, the teacher, this what I'm supposed to say
There's got to be a better way to hear our music every day
B-boys gettin' blown away but comin' outside anyway
We tried again outside in Cedar Park
Power from a street light made the place dark
But yo we didn't care, we turned it out
I don't know if you understand what I'm talkin' about
Remember Bronx River pullin' triggers countin' figures pourin' liquor
Lyric spitter shake and shiver glam and glitter
The mic mixer
I'm just a party ripper
OJ vodka sipper
Here's a little advice: think bigger

Think bigger
Think bigger
Think bigger
Think love
Think peace
Think life
Think free
Think bigger